

REMARKS

Initially, Applicant would like to express his appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided on November 5, 2004 and the acknowledgement of Information Disclosure Statements by return of the Form PTO-1449. Applicant also acknowledges with appreciation the acknowledgement of Applicant's Claim of Priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document.

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1-3 will have been amended to place them in better form for allowance. Further, claims 4-8 will have been newly added. Thus, claims 1-8 are currently pending. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections, and allowance of all the claims pending in the present application.

On page 2 of the Official Action, the Examiner asserted that claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by TARANTO (US 6,120,069).

Initially, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 1 pointing out several differences between the present invention and TARANTO. Applicant notes that features of this invention are to employ a resilient material for the guide and to form the guide inclined with respect to a longitudinal direction of the lock rod and engagable therewith such that the rod frictionally engages and deflects the guide to retain the rod in a locked position (see page 5, lines 17-18, page 6, lines 8-13, and page 7, lines 4-6 of the specification and Figures 3-5 of the present invention). Contrary to the present invention, TARANTO discloses neither a resilient guide part nor an inclined portion, much less the

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frictional locking function. Disclosure of TARANTO is at best an ordinary locking structure with a hole and rod in the same manner as prior art of the present application. Further, in TARANTO, there is nothing to teach or suggest that striker (33), which is apparently regarded as the guide of the present invention, inclines toward cylindrical locking tab (50). Moreover, for the purpose to clarify the difference above noted, Applicant has amended claim 1 to recite a function of the inclined guide.

In view of the above differences, it is clear that TARANTO fails to disclose each and every element of Applicant's claimed locking structure including the resilient guide of the present invention. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), and provide an early indication of the allowance thereof.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that dependant claims 2 and 3, which are at least patentable due to their dependency from claim 1 for the reasons noted above, recite additional features of the invention and are also separately patentable over the prior art.

Furthermore, in the essentially same light of claims 1-3, Applicant has added new independent claim 5 and new dependent claims 6 and 7, which are similar to claims 1-3. Additionally, Applicant has added claims 4 and 8 to recite a feature regarding "a cone protruding...". Applicant respectfully submits that these claims 4-8 are also patentable because TARANTO fails to disclose features recited in these claims.

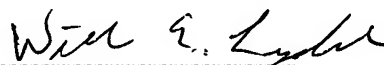
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Entry and consideration of the present amendments, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action, and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate. Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to be for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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February 4, 2005
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